



*Improving patient, workplace,
and environmental health and
safety in healthcare*

Global Health and Safety Initiative

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From the Executive Director's Desk

I trust that you know by now that our Global Health and Safety Initiative (GHSI) Summit has been postponed. When we realized that health care reform would be the dominant issue in Washington, DC in mid-September (now) we decided to refocus our efforts so that the message of improvements in safety and sustainability could receive the attention it deserves. We are working now to strengthen our documents, on coalition building and on outreach.

A key part of our work is in developing a safety and sustainability Agenda. This approach is the combined effort of the best thinking and experience from leading health systems and non-profit partners Health Care Without Harm, Practice Greenhealth, the Center for Health Design and others.

We are working to show that how we design, build and operate hospitals can lead to significant improvements in patient outcomes, workplace safety, and in preventing illnesses associated with environmental practices - and save dollars. We plan to bring together evidence-based design, safety, quality, environmental sustainability and community health in a prioritized roadmap of what health care can do to contribute to a healthier society and thereby reduce overall health care costs. We are in the midst of pulling together examples of hospitals and health system innovations and approaches that are improving patient, workplace and environment health and safety - and saving money. We plan to provide a Roadmap of how to make positive changes as well as the business case of why such changes are important.

We have also been working on a research agenda - a set of research priorities in safety and sustainability for research where we do not yet have the evidence to document what is the right

approach to pursue. With a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, GHSI has collaborated with Health Care Without Harm and the School of Public Health, University of Illinois at Chicago to interview health systems and others and develop a paper that summarizes key safety and sustainability research priorities. This work is in review now and we look forward to sharing the results when the paper is finalized.

Our hope is that through this work we can demonstrate that the movement for safety and sustainability in healthcare is growing - and that together we can make a difference.

Bob Eisenman, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Global Health and Safety Initiative

Upcoming Events

More information about these and other events can be found on the [Events Page](#) of our website. To tell us about an event, please contact GHSI staff at [info AT globalhealthsafety.org](mailto:info@globalhealthsafety.org).

- ▶ **HEALTHCARE DESIGN.09:** Attend the largest, most comprehensive HEALTHCARE DESIGN Conference ever. Don't miss out on over 60 educational sessions and 11 state of the art facility tours at HEALTHCARE DESIGN.09, in Orlando, Florida. From October 31-November 3, HEALTHCARE DESIGN.09 immerses you in a 4-day, solution-focused experience aimed at delivering successful outcomes for healthcare facilities now and into the future. Register today at www.hcd09.com.
- ▶ **GHSI Strategic Update Calls:** The purpose of these calls is to keep the greater GHSI community up to date on current activities, and to discuss topical events. Discussion topics, registration and call-in details will be posted to the [Events page of the GHSI website](#) approximately one month in advance of each call. Future calls are currently scheduled for:
 - Tuesday, November 10, 10am Pacific / noon Central / 1pm Eastern
 - Tuesday, February 9, 10am Pacific / noon Central / 1pm Eastern

We hope that you can join us.

- ▶ **EcoCare 2009:** On October 18-20, in London, Ontario, Canada, EcoCare will hold it's second conference dedicated to creating healthy and health promoting hospitals. EcoCare is the only conference in Canada to speak directly to the link between healthcare and the environment, and presents both practical and innovative ways to encourage and inspire ecological stewardship within the Canadian Healthcare Sector. For more, [visit the EcoCare website](#).
- ▶ **TEDMED 2009:** Set for October 27 through 30, the fifth in a series created by Marc Hodosh and Richard Saul Wurman, [TEDMED](#) celebrates conversations that demonstrate the intersection and connections between all things medical and healthcare related: from personal health to public health, devices to design and Hollywood to the hospital. Together, this encompasses more than twenty percent of our GNP in America while touching everyone's life around the globe. TEDMED 2009 will be held at the Hotel

del Coronado in San Diego, California.

- ▶ **APHA Annual Meeting & Exposition:** The American Public Health Association's (APHA) 137th Annual Meeting and Exposition, "Water and Public Health," is set for November 7-11, 2009, in Philadelphia, PA. [Registration is now open](#). APHA's Annual Meeting and Exposition is the oldest and largest gathering of public health professionals in the world, attracting more than 13,000 national and international physicians, administrators, nurses, educators, researchers, epidemiologists, and related health specialists. APHA's meeting program addresses current and emerging health science, policy, and practice issues in an effort to prevent disease and promote health.
- ▶ **Greenbuild 2009:** [Greenbuild](#) will be in Phoenix, Arizona, November 11-13, 2009. The world's largest conference and expo dedicated to green building, Greenbuild hosts thousands of building professionals from all over the world for three days of educational sessions, renowned speakers, green building tours, special seminars, and networking events.

What's New?

Here are a few of the latest developments from GHSI's workgroups, members, and NGO partners:

- ▶ **Joint Commission Center for Transforming Healthcare Takes Aim at Patient Safety Failures:** The Joint Commission recently announced the launch of a new program that is designed to improve health care safety practices, starting with a rigorous approach toward hand-washing by hospital staff. It is estimated that health care hand-washing failures are linked to almost 100,000 American deaths a year and cost US hospitals at least \$4 billion a year to combat. For more on this new effort, see this [Joint Commission press release](#), or the [new program website](#).
- ▶ **Become EDAC Accredited by Halloween:** Are you attending [HEALTHCARE DESIGN.09](#)? Take the EDAC exam at the conference and receive 10% off the regular exam price of \$285. Immediate scores will not be available, but CEU forms may be submitted upon receiving a passing score to obtain credits retroactively.

What are people saying about the EDAC program?

- John Kouletsis of Kaiser Permanente participated in the Beta version of the EDAC exam, and discusses his exam experience in this [4-minute podcast](#).
- *Architect* Magazine evaluates the program in a recent article: "[Is EDAC the next LEED?](#)"

Workgroups

Interested in joining the GHSI and participating in one or more of these workgroups? Please contact GHSI staff at [info AT globalhealthandsafety.org](mailto:info@globalhealthandsafety.org), and we'll put you in touch with the appropriate workgroup leader to get you started.

- ▶ The focus of the [Research Collaborative](#) is to help provide funding and facilitate research that links better building designs, greener and safer materials and products and

improved approaches to operations that will reduce the hazards associated with negative health affects.

- ▶ The **Sustainable Operations** workgroup strategy focuses on the acceleration of best practices for operations among the GHSI partners and the entire healthcare sector, including Environmental Services, Hazardous Materials, Safety, Dietary/Food Services, and Risk Management.
- ▶ The **Healthy Purchasing** workgroup will use the collective purchasing power of participating hospital systems and their Group Purchasing Organizations (GPOs) to transform the market for healthcare products and technologies that meet the goals of patient and workplace safety and environmental sustainability, including identifying priority products and developing a database of environmentally preferable product specifications.
- ▶ The **Built Environment** workgroup will provide access to an array of "best practices" to implement strategies that augment patient safety and workplace safety. These strategies also will maximize the sector's environmental performance while reducing healthcare's eco-footprint and contributing to the health and safety of patients and workers. The materials subcommittee of the Built Environment workgroup will provide information and tools, such as the Pharos database tool, to help systems procure building products that are healthier for patients, staff and the community.

Have Questions?

Visit our [GHSI website](#) for frequent program updates and information about upcoming meetings and events. If you have direct questions about becoming a member of GHSI, please contact GHSI Executive Director, Bob Eisenman, Ph.D., at 510-418-6197 or [beisenman AT globalhealthsafety.org](mailto:beisenman@globalhealthsafety.org).

Thank you for your help. Working together through GHSI, we can transform the health care industry and improve patient, worker, workplace and environmental safety.

To read prior issues of the GHSI Online Newsletter, go to the [GHSI press room](#).

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